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WILL FOREIGN MINISTERS HAVE TO ENTRUST PEACEMAKING TO UN?

FOR the fourth time since V-J Day the Foreign Ministers of the great powers will meet on June 15, and attempt to break the deadlock between Russia and the Western Allies which has thus far prevented completion of peace treaties with Italy and the other Axis satellites. During the month that has elapsed since the Ministers last conferred at Paris, their deputies have been trying to iron out some of the problems that have blocked progress on the settlements, and they are reported to be in agreement on several specific recommendations.

DEPUTIES FAIL TO END DEADLOCK. When these recommendations are examined, however, they are found to deal only with very minor points, including the size of Rumania's land, sea and air forces, and the limitations which should be imposed on Bulgaria's army and military aviation. The deputies have also decided that all Italian frontiers should be demilitarized to a depth of 20 kilometers, and they have gathered information on Italy's border disputes with France, Yugoslavia and Austria. In connection with the more fundamental issues raised by the peace treaties, the deputies have been hampered by the same disparity of views that arose during the meetings of the Foreign Ministers themselves. There has been disagreement on even such a seemingly minor question as the size of Bulgaria's naval strength, for Russia wishes Bulgaria to have a large Black Sea fleet while Britain and the United States—who are reluctant to see the balance of power in Southeastern Europe radically shifted at the expense of Greece and Turkey—oppose this plan. Moreover, Soviet opposition to the Anglo-American proposal that freedom of commerce and navigation of the Danube be guaranteed is undiminished, since Moscow suspects the Western powers of intending to use this guarantee as a means

of influencing Eastern European affairs. Above all, the deputies have been unable to cope with the basic issues in the Italian treaty, and have avoided debate on such vexed questions as whether peace should be made with Austria in the immediate future and whether new Allied arrangements should be devised for Germany.

NEW TASKS FOR UNITED NATIONS? Since the Foreign Ministers will convene under circumstances which could hardly be less propitious, the prospect clearly exists that one or more of the great powers may seek a different method of writing the treaties. There have been hints that Britain and the United States might, as a last expedient, draft separate agreements with the former enemy states. But the only alternatives suggested are those for calling a 21-nation conference and Secretary Byrnes' proposal of May 20 that if all else fails, "the United States will feel obliged to request the General Assembly of the United Nations under Article 14 of the charter to make recommendations with respect to the peace settlements." This suggestion has been widely regarded, notably in Moscow, as a diplomatic threat designed to produce workable compromises among the Foreign Ministers. Yet if the impasse continues at Paris, Mr. Byrnes may press his suggestion and, in so doing, raise more searching questions than have thus far been posed concerning the powers of the United Nations organization.

The chief problem raised by Mr. Byrnes' proposal is that the UN was founded to keep the peace once it had been established, rather than to make the treaties concluding World War II. While the Charter should be sufficiently flexible to permit an evolution along lines different from those laid down at San Francisco, any effort to expand the jurisdiction of the United Nations can succeed only if there

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is unanimous agreement among the great powers. As Soviet spokesmen have already indicated, Russia will strongly oppose discussion of the peace treaties by the Assembly, for Moscow realizes that it would be unable to marshal majority support on disputed questions. If, therefore, the Foreign Ministers fail to reach agreement at Paris, the United States may find itself obliged to choose between a course of action that might cause withdrawal of the Soviet Union from the United Nations, or acceptance of further postponement of the European peace treaties.

This question, affecting the entire future of the United Nations organization, emerges at a moment when the prestige of the Security Council is being challenged by the Iranian and Spanish cases. Brushing aside technicalities that have obscured the dispute over Azerbaijan, the Iranian case has demonstrated the Security Council does not have sufficient authority to handle issues in the face of opposition from a great power. Confronted by this fact, the State Department has been considering proposing the appointment of a committee of inquiry which would, in effect, require the Security Council to grapple with the charges of continued intervention in Iran instead of merely recognizing a Russian *fait accompli* in Azerbaijan. Whether the Council could name such a committee without Russia's approval, however, is extremely doubtful.

Lack of agreement on Spain among the great powers has also raised questions concerning the

effectiveness of the Security Council. Recognizing the difficulty of securing wholehearted and speedy action by the Council the special subcommittee—which was appointed on April 29 to investigate the Polish charge that the present Spanish government constitutes a threat to international peace and security—advised on June 6 that the Spanish problem be placed before the Assembly when it meets in September. The subcommittee further proposed that, unless the Franco régime is withdrawn and certain conditions of political freedom are fully satisfied, the Assembly recommend that diplomatic relations with Franco be terminated by all the United Nations. In suggesting action by the Assembly the subcommittee was influenced by the strong desire on the part of the Australian Foreign Minister, Dr. H. V. Evatt, to strengthen the role of small nations in the organization. Whatever the reasons, for the proposal, however, the Security Council's acceptance of the subcommittee's report would be a step toward strengthening the position of the Assembly as an instrument to maintain peace when the great powers are in disagreement. Seen in broad perspective, the significance of this and other attempts currently being made to place a broader construction on the Charter, especially on the powers of the Assembly, is that they reflect the disappearance of the unanimity achieved by the great powers during the war which, it was hoped, would be carried over into the work of the U.N.

WINIFRED N. HADSEL

SIAM AND FRANCE AT ODDS OVER DISPUTED TERRITORIES

Following a flurry of speculation suggesting that the Security Council was about to be presented with a new threat to peace, Secretary-General Trygve Lie ruled that Siam's protest of May 27 against French troop movements on Siamese territory was only the filing of information and not a formal plea for United Nations intervention. Although Pridé Panymyong, Paris-educated Siamese Premier, did ask Mr. Lie for sympathy, assistance and cooperation, he made no reference to Article 35 of the Charter which requires non-members who appeal to the United Nations to accept in advance the Charter's obligations of pacific settlement. Any United Nations member, according to Article 35, may bring up such a dispute but, in the present instance, intervention by third parties so far has been limited to statements by British and American spokesmen that they would support a Siamese attempt to bring the issue before the Security Council. The Royal Siamese Legation in Washington explained, however, that it had received no instructions from Bangkok to present a formal complaint.

WHAT FRANCE WANTS FROM SIAM.

France has two interests at stake in this border conflict. One of them is the desire to regain two areas

containing about 25,000 square miles and one million people, which the Vichy government, under Japanese pressure, ceded to Siam in 1941 from the French Indo-Chinese lands of Laos and Cambodia. Since the end of the war, the French have naturally sought to get them back. The British have already negotiated a treaty restoring Burmese and Malayan territories taken by the Siamese under somewhat similar circumstances. Franco-Siamese negotiations in Saigon have thus far produced no result, a fact which induced French military men to demand a show of strength to hasten Siamese acquiescence.

French troops, however, crossed the Mekong river border into Siam on May 24 at a point between the two disputed regions. This puzzling fact can be explained by the second French aim, which is to seize Indo-Chinese guerrillas, reportedly as many as 20,000 in number, who are concentrated in this area. These guerrillas are nationalists who fled across the river from French armed forces engaged in re-establishing French control in Laos. Most of them are said to be Tonkinese or Laotians who refuse to abide by the Franco-Annamite settlement of March 6, in which Annamite leader Ho Chi Minh agreed to restoration of French authority in Indo-China in

return for French recognition of the Republic of Viet Nam (in northeastern Indo-China) as a free state within an Indo-Chinese federation. It is hardly surprising that Siam, which has been a buffer between rival French and British imperialisms for many years, is sympathetic to the aspirations of the Indo-Chinese for independence. Since these armed guerrillas frequently go back across the Mekong to raid in Laos, French officials have demanded that they be handed over by the Siamese.

AIMS OF SIAMESE DIPLOMACY. The Siamese point out that the disputed Laotian territory was originally taken from Siam by the French in a treaty of 1904, and that the Cambodian territory in question was seized by France through a similar treaty in 1907. Siamese schools for some time indulged in irredentist propaganda emphasizing the Thai (Siamese) character of the people in the disputed areas. The astute diplomats of Siam insist that all they want is an impartial plebiscite to determine the wishes of the people.

Memories of their success in arousing American support to moderate the harsh treaty terms which the British sought to impose on them in December 1945 undoubtedly influence the Siamese in their present policies. They know that the United States State Department on January 16 publicly refused to recognize Siamese acquisition of the two areas, and they perhaps calculate that if they now formally demand United Nations intervention, they will only antagonize France while failing to regain the territories. Hence the present moderate tactics, which are intended to muster the support of world opinion in order to strengthen Siam's bargaining position with France. The Siamese Foreign Minister has also used the incident as the occasion for a formal inquiry as to "the possibility of the rapid inclusion of Siam's name in the list of members" of the United Nations. On May 31 it was reported that all French troops had withdrawn across the Mekong, and that parts of the border were closed by Siam to halt the entrance of Annamite rebels.

Siam's diplomats have also placed much stress on "rice diplomacy." As Siamese Foreign Minister Direck Jaiyanama recently declared: "We have no army to bargain with the French about these provinces but we still have our rice fields, which did not suffer through the war." Only ten days before Pride Panmyong's cable to Mr. Lie, a gloomy note in the world famine crisis had come from Saigon when the French announced that the Indo-Chinese rice surplus this year would be only about 300,000 tons,

instead of the usual figure of more than 1,500,000. The Siamese Premier capitalized on this situation by pointing out to the Secretary-General that people in the area attacked by the French were being forced to abandon their rice fields at a time when the Siamese were "striving to the utmost to fulfill their obligation to produce and deliver the maximum quantity of rice to the famine stricken areas."

FRENCH TACTICAL ERRORS. In a good strategic position because of the United States attitude toward the disputed areas, the French have blundered badly in their tactics, for their armed aggression has prejudiced their case before world opinion. Both the United States and Britain, as early as May 7, had asked them to guard against violating Siamese territory. But colonial military leaders still think in terms of raising French prestige by reversion to the outmoded 19th century idea expressed in the view that "the natives understand only force." These tactics are doing France a disservice, just as they did in the Syrian crisis and in the harsh suppression of native uprisings in Algeria in May 1945; they may jeopardize France's plan to strengthen its colonial ties by the creation of a French Union.

On June 1 it was revealed that the French Foreign Office had tried to improve its position by belatedly requesting the United States and Britain to draw the attention of the Siamese government to the fact that the disputed territories had not been returned. By coincidence, on the same day, the information office maintained in New York by the French Colonial Ministry ended its activities, an economy measure which is unfortunate because France needs able spokesmen to explain its colonial role to the American public. The Franco-Siamese controversy is by no means ended. The death on June 9 of 20-year-old King Ananda Mahidol of Siam, who was due in Washington for an official visit on June 19, has stimulated new interest in the politics of that ancient kingdom.

VERNON MCKAY

Science and Scientists in the Netherlands Indies, edited by Pieter Honig and Frans Verdoorn. New York, Board for the Netherlands Indies, G. E. Stechert, 1945. \$4.00

About seventy specialists have contributed to this beautifully illustrated study of scientific endeavors in the Netherlands Indies. The articles on economic developments are useful to the student of political conditions.

China Fights On, by Pan Chao-ying. New York, Fleming H. Revell, 1945. \$2.50

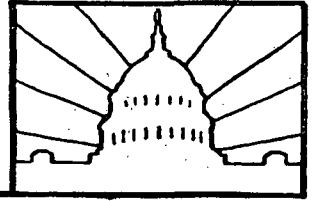
A survey of China's struggle against aggression since 1931, written by the Vice-Director of the Institute of Chinese Culture in Washington, D.C.

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Washington News Letter



ANGLO-AMERICAN UNITY IN EUROPE TO BE TESTED IN PARIS

The pattern of international relations has perceptibly altered since the interruption of the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Paris last month. The United States, which a few months ago was content simply to champion Britain in the latter's differences with the Soviet Union, has become the originator of policy in the effort of the Western powers to prevent the spread of Russian influence beyond the line from the Baltic Sea to the Julian Alps. British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin, speaking to the House of Commons on June 4, indicated that Britain fully approves the leadership taken by the United States, and one of the tasks assigned to the new British Ambassador in Washington, Lord Inverchapel, is to lend support to this policy.

BYRNES LEADS. The reopening of negotiations of the Foreign Ministers in Paris on June 15 will provide a twofold test of the potency and permanence of American leadership and British willingness to go along with it. In the first place, the meeting will determine whether the energetic condemnation of Russian policy which has characterized public statements and inspired newspaper articles in the United States during the past three weeks has persuaded Moscow to conciliate the West. The second test of the firmness of Anglo-American concord will come if Russia indicates at Paris that adverse American opinion has not deflected it from opposition to three main tenets of United States policy—a settlement in Eastern Europe satisfactory to this country, consideration of a peace treaty for Austria, and agreement on a long-term treaty for control of Germany. If Russia proves obdurate, Byrnes intends to abandon the search for agreement through the conference of Foreign Ministers of the United States, Britain, France and Russia, and to invite 21 nations to confer and accept with modifications the peace terms the great powers may propose. Present indications are that Britain would back the United States in this course if the U.S.S.R. again objected to the calling of such a conference. Bevin told the House of Commons: "If we cannot get agreement in a four-power council of Foreign Ministers, then we should take our work before the conference of 21 nations."

BEVIN AGREES. Bevin praised other American proposals which Russia has not accepted. He said the 25-year treaty for control of Germany which Secretary of State Byrnes offered at Paris was "something which would give us peace in Europe and

allow for normal development over a sufficient period to eradicate the warlike spirit and Nazism from Germany." He favored putting the question of Austria on the Foreign Ministers' agenda, and Byrnes will take to Paris the draft of an Austrian peace treaty. The United States is determined that Yugoslavia shall not have the territory of Venezia Giulia which Italy claims, and Bevin said that Britain could not accept the granting of this area to Yugoslavia. Developments elsewhere underline the parallelism of American and British policy. On May 27 the two governments sent similar notes to Rumania, criticizing Prime Minister Groza for not permitting free elections and for censoring news from the United States and Britain. Britain has not fully supported the announcement by Lieut. General Lucius Clay, U.S. Army Deputy Military Governor in Germany, that exports from the American to the Russian zone of occupation in Germany of dismantled plants scheduled for reparations were being suspended. However, news did come from London on June 5 that Britain has invited the United States and western European countries to set up a committee for the purpose of facilitating trade with the British zone. Such activity might divert to the West material that Russia claims. The British government also has given vague indications to the United States that it will accept the proposal of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry that 100,000 European Jews be admitted to Palestine, but many members of Congress doubt whether Britain will accept it in the end. Britain and the United States agree in their refusal to intervene in Spain to overthrow Franco.

In time, however, Britain may be unwilling to follow the United States unreservedly, especially if the vigor of our foreign policy should appear to be carrying both countries toward the catastrophe of war. Britain, in the conduct of foreign policy, must take into account the attitude of the Dominions. New Zealand and Australia make the same complaint about the United States that this country commonly makes about Russia—that Washington is inconsiderate of small nations. Another factor that may disturb the close alliance of America and Britain is economic. While Bevin has said that he favors the suggestions of the United States for world commercial agreements, the Colonial Office encourages British colonies to set up preferences that reduce American trading opportunities.

BLAIR BOLLES